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Strategies for crime prevention: promotion and maintenance of the rule of law and good governance: crime and public security

Crime prevention

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

Illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in explosives by criminals and the abuse and misuse of explosives for criminal purposes

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1998/17 of 28 July 1998, decided that a study should be initiated on illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in explosives by criminals and on the abuse and misuse of explosives for criminal purposes. The Council also requested the Secretary-General to prepare, as early as possible, in cooperation with relevant international and regional organizations where necessary, an action plan for collecting, reviewing and exchanging statistics and policy proposals on a number of issues related to the question of explosives in the context of crime prevention and public safety. To consider the question of preparation of such an action plan, the Council requested the Secretary-General to examine the possibility of convening a meeting of a group of experts.

2. In accordance with paragraph 16 of resolution 7/1 of the Commission, on strategic management by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, all activities envisaged in the resolutions recommended by the Commission, including resolution 1998/17, must be implemented either within the approved appropriations of the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 or, if that is not possible, through extrabudgetary funds, including voluntary contributions.

* E/CN.15/1999/1.

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3. In pursuance of paragraphs 1 and 2 of resolution 1998/17 of the Council, the study should cover (a) illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in explosives by criminals, and (b) abuse and misuse of explosives for criminal purposes. The focus of the study and the action plan would be on:

(a) Criminal incidents in which explosive substances were involved, including the number of such incidents, the number of victims involved, the nature and extent of harm caused, the extent of damage to property and the type of explosives used;

(b) The diversion for criminal use of explosives;

(c) The status of national legislation and regulations on explosives in individual countries;

(d) Relevant initiatives for the regulation of explosives at the regional and international levels.

4. The Centre for International Crime Prevention of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention of the Secretariat conducted a preliminary review of the information available concerning the issues to be covered by the study. They include the number of incidents and victims involved, the link between organized crime and explosives, the damage to property and the extent and nature of harm caused, and the motives for criminal misuse of explosives. Other relevant issues were also examined, focusing on types of explosives being diverted for criminal misuse, illicit manufacturing of explosives and illicit cross- border trafficking in explosives, as well as theft of explosives. Such a review revealed that there were neither globally and firmly agreed upon definitions of terms to be used in the study, nor comprehensive statistics on the criminal incidents in which explosive substances were involved worldwide. While some preliminary information could be secured, its quality and comprehensiveness was inadequate to form a basis of a substantive report. Thus, it is obvious that a major effort has be made to carry out the study. Such an effort would greatly benefit from the assistance of a group of experts, as requested in paragraph 3 of resolution 1998/17 of the Council.

5. On 23 October 1998, the Executive Director of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention wrote to Member States to inform them about the activities emanating from the seventh session of the Commission, the implementation of which depends on the availability of extrabudgetary resources, including the conduct of the above-mentioned study. The estimated cost of the activities foreseen to give effect to resolution 1998/17, including a meeting of a group of experts, amounts to $90,000. As soon as the required funds are made available, the Centre will proceed with a preparation of the study.